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THE
Pastoral and Magisterial
DUTIES
OF THE
Gospel Ministry

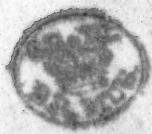
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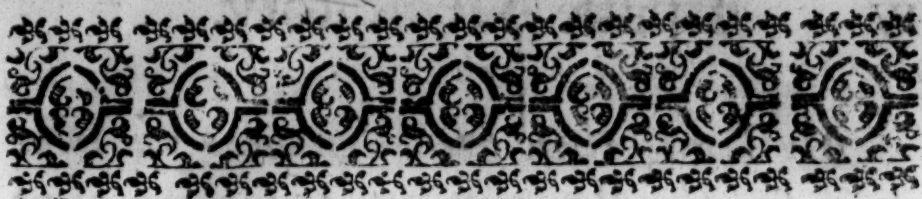
IN AN
ESSAY

DEDICATED to the
Lord Bishop of *Bangor*.

B Y
ANTHONY HOLBROOK, A. M.
Chaplain to the RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD Lord LUMLEY,
and Rector of Waltham Parva in Essex.

L O N D O N,
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TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God
B E N J A M I N
Lord Bishop of *Bangor*.

My Honoured Lord,

GIVE me Leave to do my self the Honour of putting this Discourse under your Patronage: I am ambitious of taking this Opportunity to express that just Sense I have of the Injury that hath been done to your Lordship, in torturing a Meaning out of the Words of your most excellent Preservative and Sermon, contrary to the plain Design of those Discourses, contrary to your own Absolutely's and Properly's, those strong univocal Terms you chose to guard your most admirable Thoughts against such arbitrary Misconstructions.

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My Lord, those great Services you have done for the Revolution and our present Civil Establishment will never be pardon'd; the highest Intrenchment you can raise for your Defense will be unable to secure your Sacred Character against the Envy and Malice of a sort of Men amongst us, who hate the very Ground upon which you stand.

Your Lordship hath the Honour (give me leave to use that Word) to be the Head of that Cause, where every Person that is hearty in it, is sure to be reproached, as an Enemy to the Church of England, as an Enemy to her primitive Polity and Order, by furious Jacobites and Popish Bigots; such hard Treatment is to be expected from that Sett of Men, whose Panegyricks dishonour, whose very Praises defile the Character they would adorn; but blessed is your Lordship when such Men revile you and persecute you.

I have not presumed, my Lord, to concern my self with the Merit of the Controversy,

Epistle Dedicatory.

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versy, no Hand but your own is equal to the Work; your Enemies have already felt the Strength of your calm undisturbed Reasoning, animated with the Spirit of Humanity and Candor; your Innocence hath triumph'd over Slander and Detraction.

My Design, my Lord, is to vindicate the Pastoral Offices of the Gospel Ministry, of that Ministry your Lordship, in the incomparable Pieces just mentioned, hath delivered from the Abuses and Usurpations of Popery, from those adulterous Colours that were put upon it by the envenom'd Hands of the most furious Jacobites.

*Give me leave to take Notice of the concluding Civilities of your Lordship's Opponents in this Controversy, how critical those Writers are, to distinguish betwixt your Episcopal Character and your Person; how they shew an open Enmity to the Reverend Doctor Hoadly, even whilst they are complementing the Bishop of Bangor. But, my Lord, I can with Satisfaction assure you, that I sincerely honour you as you are
a Spi-*

vi Epistle Dedicatory.

a Spiritual Father of the Church, and that I honour you for your own Merits, for those uncommon Personal Gifts God hath bestowed upon you, and which you have successfully used, in vindicating his pure Religion against Superstition, and our Civil Liberties against Oppression and Tyranny. I have a particular Ambition, my Lord, to write my self,

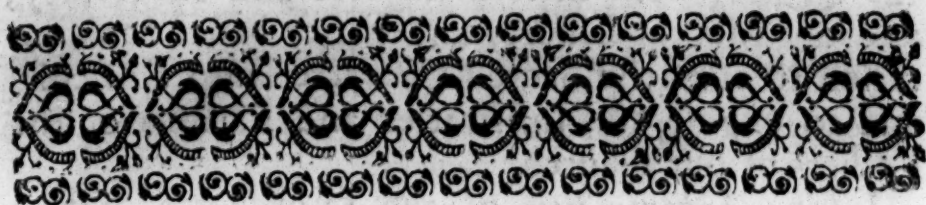
My LORD,

Your Lordship's most dutiful

and most obedient Servant,

Anthony Holbrook.

CHAP.



C H A P I.

*The Pastoral and Magisterial DUTIES
of the Gospel Ministry vindicated, in
an Exposition of*

St. Matthew 28. 20.

*And lo, I am with you always, even unto
the End of the World.*

THE fatal Controversy that hath happen-
ed in this Church about the Meaning
and Design of my Lord of *Bangor* in his
Preservative and Sermon, hath of late
taken up the Time, the Discourse, and Thoughts
of all sorts of People who are curious in Matters
of this extraordinary nature; and it must be own'd
with Grief, that the fierce contradicting Spirit that
hath animated this Debate on the side of my Lord's
Opponents, hath afforded Matter of Triumph
to the Enemies of the Ministerial Character, but
of melancholy Consideration to those pious People
who are hearty in the common Cause of reveal'd
Religion.

The Noise of this furious Debate soon reach'd
our Country Retreats, and disturbed with cross
unfriendly Altercations our Rural Quiet; the Pre-
judices, Interests, and Passions of Men, engag'd in
the

the Quarrel with their usual Fire and Inveteracy; and our Men of Liberty and Fancy hence took occasion to turn the Sacred Character into Ridicule, and to expose the Infirmities and Passions of the Fathers of our Church.

I soon became sick of the Impressions of this Controversy, and despaired to find out the Merit of the Cause amongst those Passions and Contradictions that worked in the Management of it; therefore to give my self the best Information I could get of the Duties of the Gospel Ministry, which were now become the common Themes of our Blue Aprons and Plow-men, I applied my leisure Hours in searching the Scripture Account of this Matter, and to put together those Thoughts that occurred to me in this Search; and those Thoughts I formed upon this Subject, are those I now offer to the Publick.

This Text of holy Scripture, *St. Matthew 28. 20. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World*, being the principal Pillar and Foundation upon which the perpetual Visibilty of the Church of Christ upon Earth, a Succession in the Gospel Ministry, and the continual Presence of Christ, in the Operations of his Spirit with his Ministers, in the Execution of their Pastoral Duties, are built, I conceive it will be highly convenient to weigh the true Importance of this Scripture.

I must confess I am much inclined to bestow a few Words upon this Scriptural Phrase, *I am with you to the End of the World*, because I am of Opinion it is miserably perverted, and put forth under false Colours, by the Adversaries of the Ministerial Character, who pretend to have a delicate Taste for the critical Propriety of it.

What I have observed in the Scripture Phraseology concerning this Term *συνέληθα ἕως αἰῶνος*, which
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in our *English* Version is rendred *the End of the World*, is this, that this Phrase is equivocal amongst the holy Writers, expressing very opposite Ideas; but I am positive that this Phrase in the New Testament never signifies a Period of Time, determinable within the Compass of the natural Lives of Men, the favourite Fancy of those Heads who have distinguished themselves upon this Text in their Enmity to the Ministerial Character.

This *Greek* Term *αἰών* among the Seventy Translators of the Old Bible, from whom it is very observable (*) that the Writers of the Gospel borrowed most of their particular *Greek* Phrases and Idioms, carries various Significations; amongst these it sometimes signifies Eternity, sometimes an Age, sometimes the Duration of the visible material Creation, from its Beginning to its final Conclusion; sometimes the Duration of the Law of *Moses*, from its original Establishment to its final Consummation in the Promulgation and Settlement of the Gospel.

This Term *αἰών* in the Phrase of the Writers of the Gospel bears the same opposite Meanings, where it sometimes sets out the visible material Creation (b), sometimes Eternity (c), sometimes the Age of the Law of *Moses*; (d) and Conclusion and Consummation of the Law, in the Settlement of the Gospel, is called, *τέλη τῶν αἰώνων, σωτέλεια τῶ αἰώνου*, namely, the End of the Ages, and the Consummation of the Age.

II. The famous Rabbinical Division of the Duration of the World was into these great Epochas, namely, the Age before the Law, the Age of the

(*) *Kirch. Concor.* Vol. 2. p. 791. (a) *Heb.* 1. 2. c. 11. 2. *Acts* 15. 18. (b) *Mark* 3. 29. *John* 4. 14. (c) *John* 9. 32. *Luke* 24. 3. (d) *1 Cor.* 10. 11. *Matth.* 24. 3.

Law, and the Age of the Messias. The *Greek* Translators of the Old Bible express the *Saculum Mosai- cum*, one of those Epochs, by their Term αἰών; it is where they call the Aaronical (e) Priesthood ἱερεῖα εἰς τὸ αἰῶνα, and the Mosaical Dispensation, διαθήκη αἰώνιου. Now it is very plain that the Mosaical Dispensation was a Temporary Institution, that was to expire upon the Promulgation of the Gospel; so the Term αἰών, when applied by them to the Law of Moses, can only signify a Temporary Duration, the Rabbinical Age of the Law.

And it is to be observed that this Term αἰών is once used by the *Septuagint* to set out the Age of the Messias, the last of the Rabbinical Epochs; it is in that remarkable Prophecy we have of the Messias, where he is called (f) Πατήρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, viz. the Father of the Age to come. True it is this Passage in our *English* Translation is rendred everlasting Father; but Father being the proper Scriptural Name of the First Person in the blessed Trinity, and not applicable to the Son, the Second Person in the Trinity, without confounding the Persons, I presume the *Greek* Version of the Text that I have laid before you is the truest and most natural.

And that I may not be thought to put a Version upon my Readers that is contrary to the *Vatican* Copy of the *Septuagint*, and to our own *English* Translation, without good Authority, I desire that it may be observed, for my Justification herein, that the critical and ancient Father *Eusebius* makes use of this Version, as may be seen in the Collection of the various Readings of this Text, printed at the End of the *Septuagint*, published by *Daniel*; and that *St. Jerom*, the ablest Textuary in the La-

(e) *Exod.* 29. 9. c. 27. 21. c. 31. 17.

(f) *Isaiab* 9. 6.

tin Church, translates the Place we are now upon out of the Original *Hebrew* in the vulgar Bible set forth by Pope Clement VIII. *Pater futuri saculi, the Father of the Age to come.*

And that there is nothing in this Translation of that Text contrary to the *Hebrew* Original, is evident in those Observations these curious Criticks in that ancient Language, (g) *Kircher*, *Buxtorf*, and *Pagnin*, have made upon the original Word *אין*, wherein it appears that it promiscuously signifies *Eternity*, or *an Age*.

The Pen-men of the Gospel bring this Idiom of the Seventy into their own Works, (h) amongst whom this Term *αἰών* very frequently signifies *an Age*, and *the Age of the Messias*, as those who are curious may see to their Satisfaction in the useful Labours of *Stephens*. The great Spiritual Privileges of the Age of the Messias are called (i) *δυνάμεις τῆς μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*, *the Powers of the Age to come*, (k) and *the Conclusion of the Age of the Messias*, *σωτηρία τοῦ αἰῶνος*.

III. I have spent some Words and Pains in settling the true Signification of this Term *αἰών*, because I have not met with any Writer who hath fully considered all its Scriptural Meanings; and that the Adjustment of the Ministerial Duties seems to me to depend very much upon the true Sense of this Word.

My Business now is to prove a Transfer of the Commission, (l) *Go, and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* and of the Spiritual Assistance of the Promise, *I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.*

(g) *Concor.* Vol. 2. p. 655. *Heb. Lex. interlineary Version.*
 (h) *Concord.* p. 39. *Heb.* 6. 5. (i) *Math.* 28. 20. (k) *Hel.* 9. 26. (l) *Math.* 28. 19, 20.

I presume it will be now no hard matter to prove a Transfer of the ordinary Pastoral Powers, of the Commission, and of the Spiritual Assistance of the Promise, upon which the Execution of the Commission is encouraged. It hath been observed, and I think sufficiently proved by the best Authorities, that the Term σωτήρεια τοῦ αἰῶνος signifies, in its true Scriptural Aspect, the Expiration or Conclusion of that Age, of that Rabbinical Epocha of Time that was in Being when the Words were spoken; and it being very plain that the *Sæculum Christianum*, the Age of the Messias, was begun when the Commission was granted, when the Promise was given, in that the Epocha of the Age of the Messias did begin at his Resurrection, when *all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth* to commission his Disciples to *go and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* now the ordinary Powers and Duties of the Commission, with the Spiritual Assistance of Christ, the Promise upon which the Discharge of the Commission is encouraged, must continue in force to the Conclusion of the Age of the Messias that was begun, in that this Phrase, namely, *the Conclusion of the Age*, hath relation to the Christian Age that was then begun. These Terms σωτήρεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, τέλη τῷ αἰῶνος, when they are spoke during the Continuation of the Age of the Law, have relation to the Expiration of that Age of the Law in the Promulgation of the Gospel, but when they are spoke after the Expiration of the Age of the Law, which concluded at our Saviour's Resurrection, as they evidently are in the Scripture that now lies before us, they must extend to the Conclusion of the Age of the Gospel, and the ordinary Pastoral Powers of the Commission, and the Spiritual Assistance of Christ with his Ministers, must remain with them to the final Expiration of the Age of the Messias.

IV. The Promise of being spiritually with the Ministers of the Gospel, even unto the End of the World, cannot be concluded within the *Sæculum Apostolicum*; namely, within the Period of the natural Lives of the Apostles, in that this Exposition of the Words is foreign to the genuine Meaning of them, in all those Scriptures where we meet with them.

We meet with this Phrase in Six Scriptures (a) referr'd to in the Margin, and I conceive that in all those Six Scriptures, it hath relation to the great Rabbinical Age then in Being; namely, to the Conclusion of the Age of the Law; or to the Expiration of the Age of the Messias. Upon the Strength of this Collateral Security, we do but Justice to extend the Words of the Promise of Christ to the Conclusion of the Christian Age, that was begun when they were spoke.

What is further worthy of our Observation in this Point, is, that the Gospel according to St. *Matthew*, and the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, in which Holy Books the Phrase we have been considering is only to be found, were originally penn'd in Hebrew by their inspired Authors, according to the Testimony of that exact Scripturist and Critick (b) *Jerom*, who knew such Matters very well: So the Term αἰών in the Greek Text of those two holy Writers, is only the Translation of the Original Hebrew עוֹלָם, a Word that signifies promiscuously an Age or Eternity, as I have before proved from *Kircher*, *Pagnin*, and *Buxtorf*, those Oracles in that

(a) *Matth.* 13. 39, 40, 49. *Matth.* 24. 3. *Matth.* 28. 20. *Heb.* 9. 26.

(b) *De novo nunc loquor Testamento; quod Græcum esse non dubium est, excepto Apostolo Matthæo, qui primus in Judæa Evangelium Christi Hebraicis literis edidit.* Hieron. Præf. in Evang.

(c) *Scripterat ut hebræus hebræis hebraice, id est suo eloquio disertissime, ut ea quæ eloquentius scripta fuerunt in hebræo, eloquentius verterentur in græcum.* Hieron. ex Catal. Scrip. Eccles.

very antient Language: And this strengthens this Interpretation; *Lo, I am with you always to the Conclusion of the Age*, namely, of the Messias.

V. I am not under the least Concern for those Authors who render this Phrase *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος* the End of the World; no, if they mean by the End of the World the Conclusion of the material Creation, I must own that this Phrase seems to me, to be more properly translated, *the Consummation of the Age*; and that in those Scriptures where we meet with it, it can look no farther than the Conclusion of the Rabbinical Age then in Being, namely, of the Age of the Law, or of the Age of the Messias, and that the other Translation is too loose, and a very faint Image of the just Spirit of that Hebrew Idiom.

The Terms of the Promise and Commission that now lie before us in their natural Signification, look a great deal farther than the Apostolical Age, or the natural Lives of the Apostles; for these Words, *I will be with you πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*, all Days, do take in the whole Compass and Duration of the Christian Church, for if our Lord had made this Promise only to the Apostles, I have the Thought from our *Whitby*, he would have said *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ὑμῶν*, I will be with you all your Days; but the Terms of the Promise in the Original being *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας* in all Days; the Promise must extend it self to the Expiration and Conclusion of the Church of Christ Militant: I must take Notice how admirably the Spirit of the Original is preserved in the Vulgar Latin; *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi*: *Lo, I am with you all Days to the Consummation of the Age*, namely, of the Messias.

VI. Having offer'd at the Settlement of the Phrase *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, I shall now explain the other Terms in the Promise; *Lo, I am with you al-*
ways,

ways, unto the end of the World: The Presence here spoken of is certainly the spiritual Presence of Christ, in that Christ could be only bodily present with his Apostles whilst he was upon Earth with them; his human Body after its Translation being confin'd in Heaven, within some certain Space, as other human Bodies are; for altho' the human Body of Christ was exalted by the personal Union of the Word with it, yet this Union did not extinguish the Property of a Human Body, of being concluded in some certain Space, or bestow upon it a Divine Ubiquity, for the holy Scriptures are unanimous in acquainting us, That the Body of Christ in its Condition of Exaltation sits at the Right Hand of God, which Phrase, as it represents the Eminence and Dignity of the Person, so also it shews us that the Body of Christ is concluded within a particular Space, as other Human Bodies are.

What more is very plain in the Scripture before us, is, that the Promise of spiritual Assistance includes in it continual Assistance, *I am with you always, to the end of the World;* but not an infallible Assistance; now the Promise of continual spiritual Assistance, doth suppose and prove, that Christ will always have a visible Church upon Earth, and spiritual Officers to labour in the Word and Doctrine. To whom was the Promise made, I beseech you? surely not to the Apostles only, that cannot be, in that all the Apostles died after they had served their Generation, and the Age of the Messias is not yet concluded, which is comprehended in the Compass of the Promise: therefore the Promise of spiritual Assistance, that was originally given to the Apostles, must extend it self to their spiritual Successors in the Church of Christ until the end of the World: I do not mean all those extraordinary Vouchsafements of Divine Assistance, which were bestowed upon the Apostles, nor that infallible Direction

rection they had ; but such ordinary Shares of spiritual Assistance as are necessary to inable the Ministers of the Church of Christ to edify the Body in Love.

In what hath been said, I think these two Observations are firmly establish'd.

I. That the Gospel Phrase *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος* doth not in any one single Text in the New Testament signify the End or Conclusion of the natural Life of Man, but always the Consummation and Expiration of some one of the great Rabbinical *Epochas*, namely, the Conclusion of the Mosaical Age, or the Conclusion of the Age of the Messias.

II. The Promise of Christ, of being always present with the Ministers of his Word, to the Conclusion of the great *Epocha* of the Age of his Gospel, doth suppose and prove that there will be a constant Succession in the Christian Ministry, and a Church visible upon Earth, to the Conclusion of the *Epocha* of the Gospel. It is manifest and allow'd that the Text before us hath relation to the Ministers of the Gospel ; and it is very plain in the Terms of the Promise, that it is to continue in Force to the Conclusion of the Gospel Age ; and so it is a very natural and clear Consequence that there will be a visible Church of Christ upon Earth, and Ministers to officiate in it to the Conclusion of the Age of the Gospel.

C H A P. II.

A Transfer of the ordinary Pastoral Offices and Duties upon the Ministers of the Gospel, to the Conclusion of the Christian Church, prov'd and vindicated.

TO handle this Particular in a Method truly informing, I conceive it will be proper to distinguish

distinguish betwixt those Ministerial Powers that were extraordinary, and in a manner peculiar to the Apostles, and to those other subaltern Officers in the Apostolical Church, and were to expire after the end of their Appointment was obtain'd; and those ordinary Pastoral Powers that were to continue with, and to be transfer'd upon the spiritual Officers in the Church of Christ to the End of the World.

It is a Matter of just Complaint, that some licentious Pens have attack'd the Ministry of the Christian Church in ironical Vindications, and sneering Titles, by confounding the just Ministerial Powers, with the extravagant Usurpations, and arrogant Encroachments of the *Romish* Clergy, and by their dishonourable Arts of blending Truth and Error together, have design'd to lead unguarded People into Mistakes, and with mobbish Arguments to sink that Credit and Reputation the Ministry of the Gospel hath in the Church of Christ, for its Works sake. It is my Opinion that the most effectual way to stop the Infection of these malignant Views, will be to handle the Pastoral Duties of the Ministers of the Gospel, under the premised Distinctions.

I. Those extraordinary Ministerial Powers which were convey'd to the Apostles, and to the other Church Officers of a subordinate Character in the Primitive Church, which were to cease, and did cease after the End of their Divine Appointment was accomplish'd, are included in this Scripture Catalogue: (a) *To one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit; to another Faith by the same Spirit; to another the Gift of Healing by the same Spirit; to ano-*

(a) 1 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

1 Cor. 14. 12.

ther working of Miracles; to another Prophecy, to another discerning of Spirits; to another divers Kinds of Tongues; to another the Interpretation of Tongues: And these extraordinary Vouchsafements of Divine Gifts, were in the Words of holy Scripture, (b) given to every one to profit withal, that they might (c) excel to the edifying of the Church; namely, be ministerial in propagating the Christian Faith. The Clergy of the Reform'd Church do not pretend to these ministerial Powers in ordinary Cases, and are not accountable for the extravagant Claims of Rome.

II. But those Pastoral Powers the Reformed Ministry esteem the Peculiars of their Characters, and are ready to vindicate by the Testimony of Scripture, against all ironical Scoffers at their Order, are those ordinary Pastoral Powers which have been, which are, and which will be necessary to be continu'd with the Ministers of the Gospel to the End of the World, to edify the Church of Christ, and to build up, and preserve the Members of it, in the true Faith: These Pastoral Powers consist in a Divine Right to teach and preach the Gospel, to administer the holy Sacraments to the People of God; and to shut authoritatively irreclaimable, egregious, contumacious Sinners, out of the external Communion of the Church, and to regrant them a Right to join again in the Communion of Prayer and Sacraments, upon their outward Tender of such Signs of Repentance, as the Church in her judiciary Discretion shall adjudge Satisfactory.

The Continuation of these Branches of Pastoral Power with the Ministers of Christ to the End of the Age of the Messias, appears to me to be necessary to preserve the Church of Christ from Ruin,

(b) 1 Cor. 12. 7.

(c) 1 Cor. 14. 12.

and to promote the Honour of God, that main View our Lord had in the Appointment of his Church; for the Church as it is a spiritual Society, can no more subsist without this Pastoral Power, than the subaltern Society of a private House without œconomick Discipline, than the greater Societies of Commonwealths without municipal Laws, and proper Officers to execute the Laws for the Good of the Society.

III. What hath been already said will receive a concluding Force, from that Account the holy Scriptures give of the Appointment of Officers in the Christian Church: This Account is, that they were ordain'd (d) *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Fulness of Christ*: That is, till the World should be sufficiently instructed in the Articles of the Christian Faith, and the Church should be able to subsist without the Help of those Officers and Gifts.

This appearing in Scripture to be the true End Christ had in appointing Ministers in his Church, so much of the Ministerial Power, as is necessary to accomplish this End of its Divine Institution, must remain in, and with the Officers of the Christian Church, till this End of their Appointment be compleated; and this Perfection of Faith and Doctrine being not attainable by mortal fallible Men in this Life, so much of the Ministerial Power, as is apparently necessary to further and advance this End, and to bring Christians as near as can be to this Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, must, and will remain in and with

(d) Eph. 4. 12, 13.

the Ministers of Christ to the End of the World, in that all the Institutions of God will continue in Force 'till the End of their Divine Appointment is compleated.

What was extraordinary in the Ministerial Appointment, ceased upon the Establishment of the Faith, there being then no Occasion for a longer Continuation of any extraordinary miraculous Divine Power, to melt down the Prejudices of Education, to overthrow the strong Holds of Sin, and to defeat the usurp'd Dominion of Satan: This great Conquest over those terrible Enemies, being successfully compleated by the Establishment of the Gospel.

But the Christian Church, being a spiritual Society that is made up of frail unthinking People, too inclinable thro' those Temptations that beset them, and thro' that habitual Incogitancy that lies upon them, to forget the Duties of their Christian Name, to fall into Sins, flat Contradictions to their holy Profession, the Continuation of an ordinary Ministerial Power, to correct the Frailties of the Individuals of the Church of Christ, and to quicken them in the Sense of their Duties, by an officary Application of the Terrors of the Lord, and of the Rewards of his Gospel, appears to me too absolutely necessary *for perfecting the Saints, and for edifying the Body of Christ*; as long as the Members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, shall remain to be what they have been in the best of Times, and what they now are, Men of Infirmities and Passions, who want to be put in Mind of their Duty, altho' they may know it already: Give me leave to observe, that without this Continuation of the ordinary Ministerial Power of Preaching the Word of God, it will be morally impossible to prevent Christians from degenerating into Looseness, Ignorance, and Iniquity, and the main End Christ had

had in appointing a Church upon Earth from being defeated in their Infirmities, Passions, and Temptations, will lie upon the Members of the Church to the End of the World; so there will be a constant Occasion for a Succession of Christian Ministers to correct these Propensions, to put forgetful Men in mind of their Duty, *to perfect the Saints, to edify the Body of Christ, 'till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man*; for a Condition of Christian Perfection is not to be reach'd on this Side the Grave.

It is matter of just Complaint, that under the Divine Institution of the Christian Ministry, which is appointed to beseech Men in Christ's Stead to be reconcil'd unto God, and to perswade them by the Terrors of the Lord to depart from all Iniquity, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this World, Sin doth oft defeat all their Labour in the Lord, and make their Ministrations unsuccessful; and from this ill Success in our Pastoral Duties, we may have a View of that vast Progress, Obstinacy and Incogitancy, Weakness and Passion, Sin and Temptations would have made in the Christian World, if the Pastoral Office of Preaching the Word had been a Temporary Institution, that was to expire upon the Settlement of the Gospel, in that we see that the pure Light of the Gospel, under the Ministerial Application of it, is unable to preserve a tolerable Face of Christianity amongst us.

But Christ the wise Legislator of his Church, who made Man, knows what is in Man; therefore in his Gospel he made a Provision for those blind Sides of our Human Nature, and appointed a Ministry to watch over them, to call upon them in his Name and in his Stead, to consider the Terms of their Christianity, and what God requires them to do to be saved.

IV. In

IV. In the Scripture Account of the Divine Institution of the Lord's Supper, it appears very plain, that Christ appointed a Succession of spiritual Officers in his Church to distribute the Bread and Wine, which he had ordained to be the standing Memorials of those great Things he had done for Men, and to perpetuate the Memory of them in his Church in visible significant Images, 'till he should come to judge the World; (e) in that without proper Officers to take Care of this holy Institution, the Church must be deprived of an Opportunity of doing this in Remembrance of Christ, and thereby (f) *shewing the Lord's Death till he come*. Now can any Person who believes the Account of the Institution and Design of the Appointment of the Lord's Supper, to be written by Inspiration, that Christ should ordain these solemn Memorials of his Sufferings in our Stead, and for our Good enforce them upon us by a positive Precept, and enjoin the perpetual Observation of them in his Church, without appointing Ministers to take care of the decent, solemn, and devout Celebration of this his own Institution, and to distribute the Memorials of his Sufferings to his good People? It is very plain that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to be observed in the Christian Church to the End of the World, and that the Apostles who were originally concern'd to see this Institution done according to the Appointment of Christ, could not personally take Care that the Church should hereby shew the Lord's Death till he come, in that the Apostles to whose Care the Institution was committed, were all gather'd to their Fathers, after they had served their Generation; so the Ministerial Right to take Care of this Divine Institu-

(e) Luke 22. 19.

(f) 1 Cor. 11. 26.

tion, and to see that all things be done in it according to the Will of the Legislator, must consequently be devolved upon those Persons in the Church, who are called into the sacred Ministry of it, by those Men who have a Right to supply the Church with a Succession of Ministers, transfer'd upon them by Christ thro' the Hands of Men.

V. The Cessation of the Ministerial Power, according to the Gospel Account of this Matter, regularly only follows the Completion of the End, for which the Power was granted; now the Saints, that is Christians, for I take the visible Members of the Church of Christ to be called Saints in the Gospel, being not yet made perfect, and the Body, namely, the Church being not fully edified, the Saints the visible Members of it, being Men of Passions and Infirmities, the Ministerial Office of preaching the Word, of watching over the Souls of the People of God, and of administering the Sacraments, (those Helps to Virtue) will remain in Force in the Church, 'till the Saints, the visible Members of the Body, are made perfect, deliver'd from their Sins and Infirmities, from their Passions and Incogitancy, in that the End of the Ministerial Appointment is not compleat, 'till this Perfection of the Saints is brought about.

From what hath been said, it is apparent that the ordinary Ministerial Power of preaching the Word of God, and of administering the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, will continue to be exercised in the Church of Christ, by the Hands of those Men who are called by God to this Honour, to the End of the World; because the End Christ had in appointing a Ministry in his Church, for the perfecting of the Saints, and for edifying the Body, (namely, the Christian Church, which in the Scripture, by a familiar Metaphor is called a Body) cannot be compleated, so long as the Church
of

of Christ shall be compos'd of Men of Infirmities and Passions.

C H A P. III.

The Magisterial Power of the Gospel Ministry discussed, and the Divine Right of the Church to excommunicate disorderly, egregious, contumacious Offenders, vindicated.

THE Church of Christ hath not only a Pastoral Power to teach and direct in Spirituals, but a Magisterial also to controul and censure too, where Crimes are against Fundamental Doctrines, and of great Consequence: This Magisterial Power, or Divine Right to excommunicate egregious, contumacious Offenders, is a standing Branch of that Ministerial Authority which belongs to the Officers of the Church, under its fastest Settlement: To confirm this Position it will be proper to weigh the Scriptural Characters and Illustrations of the Christian Church; and here we find the Church illustrated under these Images, (a) of an Army, of a Kingdom, of a House, of a natural Body; and those Illustrations guarded with proper Explanations, where the holy Penmen are plain, that the Body of Christ (namely, his Church) is a Body fitly joyn'd together, and compacted, by that which every Joint supplieth; that this spiritual House is fitly framed together: All these near Images and Illustrations of the Church of Christ, most convincingly show us, that the Church of Christ upon Earth, is a spiritual Society of the exactest Oeconomy and Beauty, wherein all the Parts do mutually depend upon one another, and agree in

(a) 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5. Matth. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 12, 16.
 1 Pet. 2. 5. Eph. 2. 21. Eph. 4. 16.

in the most delicate Order unto the edifying of it self in Love.

The Christian Church being a spiritual Society fitly jointed, compacted, and framed together unto the edifying it self in Love, instituted for the Improvement of its Members in spiritual Concernments, must certainly according to the natural Sounds of the Scripture Illustrations of it, have so much Magisterial Authority lodg'd in the Hands of its spiritual Officers and Ministers, as is in the common Nature of the thing necessary to answer the End of its Institution; (namely, to preserve it self from Ruin and Confusion, and to edify it self in Love) and now this main End of its Institution, the Edification of its self in Love, being not to be obtain'd unless this Christian Society hath Authority to disfranchise its disorderly, contumacious Members, who by pernicious Opinions disease her Vitals, and by unnatural Divisions destroy her social Unity and Peace, and by an obstinate Contempt of her Admonitions, make their Exclusion necessary for the Preservation of the Society; methinks it is undeniably apparent, that Christ Jesus the Divine Founder of this spiritual Society, hath lodg'd so much Magisterial Power in the Hands of the spiritual Ministers, as is necessary to answer that Character his own inspired Writers have given of its being a Body fitly jointed, and compacted, of its being a spiritual Building fitly framed together; in that these significant Illustrations of the Church must belong to a Society of Order and Beauty, of Strength and Power, (namely, a Power proper to preserve it self, and to promote the spiritual Edification of its Members,) which End cannot possibly be obtain'd, unless it hath a Magisterial Authority to excommunicate egregious, contumacious Sinners.

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I do not take the Fashion of my Reasoning in this Case from the Models of Human Societies, but I argue from the true Scriptural Account of the Constitution of the Church of Christ, from its being a compacted Body, and from its being a Spiritual Building, fitly framed together; that the Magisterial Power of Excommunication is essential to its Social Constitution, absolutely necessary to preserve Order and Peace in it, and secure the Church from Ruin; and that this is a constituent Part, implied in the Image of a Social Body that is united together upon Spiritual Views and Principles.

II. What Writers of an *Erastian* Cast may think of Excommunication, is too much out of the way to be now fetch'd in; we are assured that this Power is conveyed to the Ministers of the Church in our Lord's Grant of (a) binding and loosing; that in our Lord's Opinion an Offender that was righteously excommunicated had his Christian Privileges suspended; that he was reduced into the Condition of a (b) *Heathen* and *Publican*; and that according to St. Paul (c) he was delivered to *Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh*. Now let any serious Person who believes the Gospel to be the Word of God, examine these Characters of an excommunicated wicked Christian, and of the desperate Situation of his present Case, and try if he can frame a diminutive Idea of this Magisterial Authority of the Church. The Scripture Account of this Matter is extremely shocking, and so it was in the best of Times, when the greatest Men trembled under the Sentence of Excommunication; and so it is even in these Days of Licentiousness, a Sentence, when righteously applied, much more

(a) *Matth.* 18. 18.

(b) *Matth.* 18. 17.

(c) *I Cor.* 5. 5.

severe

severe than the loudest Thunder of the Civil Power.

I speak of righteous Excommunication, when it is executed by proper Hands, and in proper Cases; I will not be accountable for those Abuses that are crept into it, perhaps I may desire to be reckoned amongst those who truly esteem Lay Excommunications mere insignificant Engines, Inconsistencies in Spiritual Government, irreconcilable with the Nature of the Kingdom of Christ, where the Spiritual Arms must be used by Spiritual Hands only, and by them with the exactest Tenderness and Caution.

III. In my Plea for the Spiritual Discipline of the Church, I do not argue for any Temporal Severities, for any Secular Coercions, or Negative Discouragements, but purely for that Spiritual Discipline Christ conveyed to his Church in his Grant of binding and loosing; it is my ambition to be reckoned amongst those Christians who have a very tender Sense of the Weakness of Human Understanding, who esteem all Persecution and negative Discouragements, for the Sake of Conscience only, to be inconsistent with the mild Temper of the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, and that those warm Complexions who are for calling (d) *Fire down from Heaven* upon their Christian Brethren, who perhaps may be unhappy in thinking cross to them, do not know what manner of Spirit they are of. That the Son of Man came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. (e) That the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.

This is the plain Doctrine of St. Paul, (f) who expressly disclaims all *Dominion over our Faith*, and teaches us when he had the Spirit of Truth for

(d) Luke 9. 54, 56. (e) James 1. 2. (f) 2 Cor. 1. 24.

his Guide, that in Matters of Conscience and Salvation every Man (g) *standeth or falleth to his own Master*, *τῷ ἰδῷ Κυρίῳ*, to his own Lord Christ; and if fallible Men, who can know nothing of the Sincerity of their Brother's Conscience, any farther than he will vouchsafe to make it known to them by some overt Acts, could be brought to leave the Judgment of this to Christ, I am apt to believe we should be blessed with a great deal of more Charity and Peace than we now are, and have fewer Heresies and Schisms in the Church; Mistakes in Conscience prosper under Persecution, and gain Profelytes.

IV. But altho' it is not allowed by the good natur'd Principles of the Gospel to punish Men for the Errors of their Understandings, yet I humbly conceive that the Church of Christ hath Authority to silence those Errors and Fancies that cross her established Polity, disease her Vitals, and destroy her external Peace; yea, that the Church, after necessary Preliminaries have been used to inform and convert the Offenders, with all that Tenderness and Application that is required in the great Business of converting Souls, when the Offenders do obstinately persist in dispersing abroad the Infection of their Errors, in Contradiction to the Ministerial Endeavours and Authority of the CHURCH, hath a Power lodg'd in her, by our Lord's Grant of binding and loosing, to punish the Contumacy of her own Members by Excommunication; for in this Case the Offender is not punished for the Weakness of his Judgment, and for the Errors of his Conscience, but he is punished for his Contempt of the Spiritual Authority of the Church, for his Disobedience and Obstinacy.

(g) *Rom. 14. 14.*

And it is my present Opinion, but as I am not married to it, so I promise to divorce it upon better Information, that no individual Man is oblig'd upon Principles of Conscience to be clamorous, impertinent and troublesome in his private Notions, or to disturb the external Quiet of settled Communities with them, and that it is enough for the Peace and Satisfaction of his own private Mind, to have his Opinion to himself, to enjoy the Pleasure of his own Thoughts, without being compell'd to renounce them by Severities, or allow'd to disperse them abroad to the Disturbance of the external Peace of the settled Society.

V. I am not under much Concern for that Zeal and Care for a Reformation of Errors, that usually appears against this Authority of silencing Errors, pernicious to the external Quiet of the Spiritual Society I have been pleading for; the Truth of the Matter is, I am not sensible yet that our establish'd Church wants so mightily a Review; when those who are afraid this should be kept off by her Authority of silencing Errors which are destructive of her external Peace, have produced their Discoveries, it will be time enough to resume the Thoughts of this Argument, and till then I must ask Leave to be under no Concern about it.

I dare not say that the Excellent Constitution and Polity of the Establish'd Church of *England* are without Blemishes; as these are in a great measure Human Inventions, they may have blind sides; the Contrivances of fallible Men will partake of the Fallibility of their Authors; but I must say, that our Church is the best in the World, and the most agreeable in the Fashion of it to the Apostolical Model, that she hath no Deficiencies in Essentials, that she holds forth a safe Way to Eternal Salvation.

VI. This

VI. This Magisterial Power of silencing Errors doth not inevitably fasten private Christians down to the Errors of the Community, provided it should happen that the governing Part of the Spiritual Community should fall in with the Errors, and endeavour their Protection, if these Errors of the Community are self-evident, and betray themselves upon Examination to be directly contrary to the Will of God; because the Superior Power of God doth cancel all Obligations to external as well as internal Submission to any sinful Impositions; and in Cases thus circumstanced every private Christian is tied, upon the Peril of his Eternal Salvation, to be active in discovering the sinful Malignity of the Imposition, and in delivering his Brethren out of the Power of Darknes; but in Cases not determined in Scripture, and where the Soul is not concluded in its Consent or Dissent, but is unsettled and wavering, external Submission to the Orders of Authority is due, in that Peace and Quietness are Virtues too great to be sacrificed to slight Doubts and Conjectures. This Consideration justifies the Reformation, against the silencing Power of the Church of *Rome*, and will justify any individual private Christian, or any Body of Christians, in separating from the Iniquity of the governing Community, and in endeavouring a Reformation, in Opposition to her silencing Power.

But nothing less than the Imposition of Error, destructive of Salvation, will warrant a Breach in Church Unity, and Rebellion against the silencing Authority of the Church. But after all, it is most certain that the governing Power of the erring Church will persecute those Members who, in Contradiction to her Authority, despise her Injunctions to be quiet, and that there is no Help for this in Man; but good Christians must not be
afraid

afraid of her Terrors, and timorously forsake the Truth of God, but must *be strong in the Lord*, must forsake the Errors of the governing Church, and patiently wait God's Time for a Deliverance from her Power, that his Truth may be securely professed, and the Professors of it be freed from Persecution.

C H A P. IV.

The Case of the extraordinary Ministerial Powers examined, and the common Opinion of their Cessation disproved.

IT is my Opinion that those extraordinary Ministerial Powers we read of in the Gospel, (a) such as are *the Gifts of healing*, and of *working Miracles*, the *Gift of Prophecy*, and of *discerning Spirits*, the *Gift of divers Kinds of Tongues*, and of *interpreting Tongues*, are not peremptorily and finally taken from the Ministers of the Christian Church. In this Thought I am cross to the strongest Human Opinions in this Case, but I am persuaded what I have to produce in Defence of it will carry so fair a Face, that my Opinion will have the Colour of a Probability.

The regular Exercise of the ordinary Ministerial Power of preaching the Word of God, of administering the Sacraments, and of excluding irreclaimable Offenders out of the Communion of the Church, is sufficient under the common Direction of the Holy Spirit, which regularly goes along with the honest Labours of the Ministers of God's Word, and the sincere Endeavours of good People,

(a) 1 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

to edify a Church that is built and established; and in a Church built and established, the extraordinary Powers of the Ministerial Commission do cease, there being no occasion for the Use of them, the End of their Appointment being compleated.

But there being a vast Tract of the inhabited World which hath never heard of Christ, or hath not had the Gospel preached to its Inhabitants, with Motives sufficient to work Conviction, I mean such Motives as are able to melt down the inveterate Prejudices of Education, the strong Habits of a contrary Method of Life, and that which is more difficult, an habitual Incogitancy, and the want of rational Application (those Enemies to Truth) I think it is morally impossible to bring these poor People to the Knowledge of the Truth of God, as it is in Jesus, without those extraordinary Manifestations of a Divine Power, the primitive Workmen of the Gospel made use of in converting Infidels to the Faith, and to which they owed the great Success of their Labours.

Now altho' these Manifestations of the Spirit are ceased where the Gospel is establish'd, and where it hath been establish'd, and is abandon'd, may perhaps never be revived, those Apostate Nations *(a)* who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the World to come, having made it impossible to renew themselves again to Repentance, by their voluntary deserting the Lord Christ; yet if there be still in the World any People who have not had the Gospel preached to them (as I think the *Americans* have not) for those Travellers who have been most curious in reviewing their Customs in Religion, have not discoverd any Ruins of Chri-

(a) Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

stianity among them; it is my Thought that those extraordinary Ministerial Powers which were given for the (a) *Work of the Ministry, for perfecting of the Saints, for edifying the Body of Christ*, will be regrant'd to those Christian Missionaries, who go among those barbarous Nations, with a pure Design to promote the Honour and Glory of God in their Salvation: For the End of these ministerial extraordinary Gifts being not obtain'd, in relation to those who have not heard of Christ, the Promise of that miraculous Assistance, seems to me to be in full force, in relation to such Missionaries. For these Gifts being bestow'd upon Men for the (b) *Work of the Ministry, for perfecting of the Saints, for edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man*, must certainly according to the true Design of their Appointment, remain in full Force 'till these Ends of their Appointment are obtain'd.

What less than this can the Promise of Christ, of being with the Officers of his Church *in all Days*, even to the End of the Age of the *Messias*, signify? Can it signify any thing less than that he will be with his Ministers in imparting to them all such Branches of Ministerial Power as are necessary to enable them to propagate the Gospel with Success, and to disciple all Nations according to the Terms of the Ministerial Commission? And there being the same Occasion for the extraordinary Manifestations of the Spirit amongst the *Indians*, to subdue their Passions and Vices, and to bring them off from the Sins of their former Conversations, as there was of old to convert *Greeks* and *Roman*; (yea there is a much greater Occasion for these extraor-

(a) *Eph. 4. 12, 13.*

(b) *Eph. 4. 12, 13.*

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dinary

ordinary Illustrations of the Power of God, as these *Indians* are more illiterate and savage) I must own it is my Thought that Christ will impart all such extraordinary Assistance to the Ministers of his Word, who shall labour in the Conversion of these *Indians*, as may be requisite to make the Work of their Ministry successful, and to build his Church amongst them.

III. This appears in the gradual and regular Cessation of these Manifestations of the Spirit in the World; for these Demonstrations of the Power of God did not all cease together, but did gradually abate, and regularly cease as the Gospel gain'd an Establishment.

These Gifts were not the peculiar Ornaments of the Apostolical Character, or of the Ministers of the First and Second Century of the Church, but were given to the Ministers of the Gospel in such Measures as God saw proper to build up, and establish his Church, 'till the Church was built and establish'd.

(a) The Christian Apologists in their Pleadings for the Gospel, appeal to the Power of dispossessing *Demoniac's* in the Second, in the Third, and in the Fourth Century; and boldly lay the Merits of their Cause upon their publick Success in these Achievements, and by this time Christianity was become the National Religion of the greatest Parts of *Asia, Europe, and Africa.*

Whence it is evident that these extraordinary Demonstrations of the Power of God, did gradually cease, as the Occasions for the use of them, in converting the World to the Faith of Christ, did abate, by the Progress and Establishment of the

(a) *Min. Fæl. p. 31. Quart. Ed. L. Macre. Cypr. ad Demet. p. 328. part 12. Ed. Pam. Last. Lib. 2. Pag. 194. 394. 399. Ed. Oxon. off.*

Gospel, as they became unnecessary for the Work of the Ministry, for perfecting of the Saints, for edifying the Body of Christ, the Church being built upon the Evidence of these Miracles; but where the Church is not establish'd, where the Saints are not made perfect, where the Body of Christ is not edified, it appears to me that the same extraordinary Gifts which inabled the first Preachers of the Gospel to labour in the Work of their Ministry with Success, will be imparted to their Successors in the Ministry, 'till these Ends of their Appointment are compleated, 'till the Body of Christ is edified, until those Nations that have not yet been converted, all come in *the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Fulness of Christ.*

This Continuation of these extraordinary Ministerial Powers in the Case under our Hands, will appear to be necessary for the Work of the Ministry, when we consider the great Power of Satan amongst the *Indians*, how he leads those miserable Creatures Captives to his dumb Idols, even as they are led, and hath them in as much Subjection as he had those Heathens the Gospel turned to the living God.

Now before the Ministers of Christ can convert those Nations, who are under the Dominion of Satan, deluded with his magical Artifices, with his oracular Cheats, they must first destroy this Power of Satan, they must defeat his Magick and silence his Oracles; and it is before you whether you can believe that this can be done without the Communication of that extraordinary Power of (b) casting out Devils authoritatively, which was given to the Primitive Ministers of Christ for the

(b) *Mark 16. 17.*

Work of the Ministry, and whether the Ministers of Christ, who undertake the great Business of converting Infidels, may not rationally expect the Communication of so much extraordinary Power, as is necessary for the Work of their Ministry, and to edify the Body of Christ. It is my present Thought that the Conversion of Infidels thus enslaved by the Devil, is impracticable without the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit of God, and that God will impart these Gifts to his Ministers when they are necessary for the Work of their Ministry.

IV. It is reasonable to expect this from the universal Goodness and Justice of God, who cannot be supposed to leave such populous Nations out of the Care of his Providence, and to make no Provision for their Information in the eternal Truths of Jesus, who cannot be supposed to leave these miserable *Indians* to be harrassed and destroy'd by Satan, who dreadfully deludes these Savages with Infernal Policies, with terrible Apparitions and Possessions, and even torments their Souls with the tragical Modes of Infernal Worship, without affording them the same gracious Helps he hath afforded other Nations, when under the like unhappy Circumstances, to deliver themselves from this Bondage and Tyranny, *and to come to the Knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent to destroy these Works of the Devil.*

These *American Indians* being Slaves to the same Passions, Prejudices, and Habits of Education, to the same Infernal Tyranny as the rest of the World was before its Conversion to Christ, must have the same Arguments to melt these down, the rest of the World had, and without the Help of those Arguments, the Conversion of the *Indians* appears to me to be a wild Undertaking, and undigested Fancy.

I am

I am sensible it is alledg'd against what I have advanced, That the Case of Christians is very different from what it was when the Gospel was first set up, that the Primitive Ministers of Christ were by their Education unqualified to preach the Gospel with Success, in Opposition to the wise Men and the Disputers of the World, to Human Philosophy and Eloquence, who by their Interest and Education were turned against it; and that considering the Situation of Mankind, it was absolutely necessary to furnish the Disciples with extraordinary Power, to inable them to propagate the Work of their Ministry with Success.

But the Posture of Affairs is now chang'd, the substantial Learning of the World is amongst the Christians, and those Nations who know not Christ are illiterate to a Proverb; so Christians by their acquired Accomplishments are well furnished for the Conversion of Infidels, without the extraordinary Qualifications of the Primitive Missionaries.

I answer: Education and Letters do doubtless give the Christians considerable Advantages against the Infidels in the artful Manage of Argument and Reason; but I am not satisfied that Learning is sufficient to melt down the Prejudices of an ignorant Education, to root up old Habits of Life, to bring Men off from their old Conversations, and to give a new Cast to a stubborn unthinking Nature.

I desire to express my self in all due Respect to Learning; Learning is good Armour to encounter Learning; but Learning in my Opinion is a very improper Weapon to assault ignorant People, who by Habit of unthinking, by a peculiar Indolence of Temper, are incapable of seeing and understanding the Beauty and Force of substantial Reasoning.

That weak Influence elaborate Discourses have over Christians of Education, is a Matter of common Complaint, and can we imagine that Philosophy

phy and Reason should do more among the barbarous *Indians*, that they should be carried off by the metaphysical Turn of an Argument, that they should yield themselves Captives to the Beauties of Christian Philosophy, and be capable of knowing the Consequences of Propositions set out with the Embroideries of Art.

The Bulk of Mankind appears to me to be now much of the same Cast, as it was in the Beginning of the Gospel, (I mean those who are not enlightened by the Doctrines of Christ) subject to the very same Weaknesses, Passions, and Vices, and only capable of being converted by that Demonstration of the Spirit and of the Power of God, the Primitive Christian Missionaries were impow'ed to give, in Proof of their Doctrines. Upon the Force of the Reasons just mentioned, I am inclined to believe that the Grant of the extraordinary Ministerial Powers is only suspended, and that when the same extraordinary Ministerial Power is necessary for the Work of the Ministry, and to edify the Body of Christ, that God will take off the Suspension, and regrant New Life and Vigour to the Ministerial Commission.

The Ministerial Character hath suffer'd in the Images of disorderly People in all Ages of the Church: I have no Inclination to guess at the Grounds of this Contempt of the Clergy; but true it is, that the best of this Name have been vilely treated by wicked Men: (a) *Ahab* hated *Micaiah* because he never prophesied good, but always Evil unto him: (b) *Elijah* was set out as a Disturber of *Israel*: And (c) *St. Paul* was hated by the *Galatians* because he told them the Truth.

(a) 2 Chron. 18. 7. (b) 1 Kings 18. 17. (c) Gal. 4. 16.

Those who now have the Honour to serve in the Ministry of the Gospel, cannot expect to fare better than their Predecessors in that Office, and to escape the Tryal of cruel Mockings from wicked People, who ridicule every thing that is serious, and turn the Belief of a Future State and of their own Immortality into a Jest; but blessed is that Ministry that is persecuted and hated by such evil People: Their highest Encomiums defile, and their brightest Characters reproach, when their Sneers and Satyrs adorn that Office they pretend to banter, and add true Lustre to it, in the Opinion of all good People.

The Ministerial Character is secure in the Hearts and Affections of all those People, whose Hearts and Affections are of Value, it will stand to the End of the World, it will be protected by its Master Christ Jesus, so that the Gates of Hell can never prevail against it.



A Letter

LETTER

To Mr. LAW

About the Uninterrupted

Episcopal Succession.

S I R,

I Have lately entertained my self with your second Letter to my Lord of *Bangor*, in which you have advanced some Things very cross to that Opinion I have of such Matters. I presume you will not expect an Apology for this Trouble, since I have your own Example to plead in my Excuse, you have twice offered your private Thoughts to my Lord in this Controversy.

It is your way to talk great thro' all your Letter, and to pretend to Demonstration and Certainty; but really your new way of Reasoning hath not Force enough to take me with it; therefore give me leave to propose to your Consideration those Arguments which move me to disagree with you in the Business of the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession in the Church.

You

You have rightly observed, that God Almighty hath vouchsafed to convey his Blessings to the World thro' the Ministry of Men, under the Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian Dispensations: And we are taught that this is good Divinity in those Scriptures, where we read; (a) *That God ordains Strength out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings*; and that we have the (b) *Treasure of Divine Gifts convey'd to us in Earthen Vessels*.

That Authority Men have to dispense to their Brethren the Blessings of God, doth not flow from their Personal or Human Qualifications, but from the Powers of their Divine Commission, and their natural Weakness and Fallibility doth not make them incapable of conveying the Blessings of God instrumentally, in that the Blessing comes from God, and Man is only the Instrument of Conveyance. I entirely agree with you, that all Arguments that are used in disproving this Position, which are brought from the Weakness and Fallibility of the Instrument of Conveyance, are very weak and inconclusive; yea, I dare say more, that this Method of Reasoning is contrary to Scripture, where it is plain, that Men are those ordinary Instruments God uses in conferring his Blessings upon Men, and that God hath occasionally, to illustrate his Providence, made use of wicked Instruments to carry his Blessings to the World; infamous (c) *Balaam* was appointed to bless *Israel* in the Name of God; and it is probable that (d) *Judas*, who is called a Devil, preached the Gospel, and worked Miracles.

It is very good Protestant Divinity, that the Virtue and Efficacy of the Divine Appointments doth not depend upon the Personal Dispositions of the Ministers of them, but upon the Blessing of

(a) *Psal.* 8. 2.
(d) *John* 6. 70.

(b) *2 Cor.* 4. 7.

(c) *Num.* 23. 18.

God. We are not concerned in what *Rome* speaks about the Intention of the Priest; this is an ensnaring Doctrine, fitted up to aggrandise the Ministerial Character, and to perplex the Quiet of tender Consciences.

You are pleased to point out my Lord of *Bangor*, as an Enemy to this Doctrine: But give me leave to observe, That when my Lord's *Properly* and *Absolutely* are taken into the Question, his Thoughts are upon the Square with the Protestant Notions: Infallible and absolute Benedictions, Confirmations, and Consecrations, are not yet taken into the Protestant Schemes. *Rome* hath these things in her Doctrines, and talks magnificently upon them; and indeed some Reformed Writers who are of your way of thinking, have carried these things to an unusual Height; and when my Lord is pleased to call these Matters Niceties and Trifles, he hath his Eye in those diminutive Epithets, upon these Doctrines as they appear in the Dress the Nonjuring Way hath put upon them.

This is preliminary: I am now come to the interrupted Episcopal Succession; the Point I propose to handle with you at this time: you speak of this in that usual Assurance which adorns your Letter: But methinks it had been very proper for you to have considered these two Matters, before you had formed such peremptory Conclusions.

I. Whether *Rome* at the Reformation was a true Church *quoad esse*.

II. Whether the Ordinations she gave after her Fall into Idolatry and Heresy were valid.

Let me observe, that all you have dictated Magisterially upon the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession, will stand for nothing unless you can stoutly defend these two Points: I shall talk with you a little about these Matters by and by. I am

I am apt to believe that we are agreed, that the Powers of the Christian Ministry are not proper, absolute, and infallible, but ministerial and officia-ry, which receive their Vigour and Efficacy from the Blessing of God, who in the ordinary Methods of his Providence, vouchsafes to convey supernatural Graces to Men, thro' the Hands of Men, taken *(e)* from among Men, and ordained for Men, in things pertaining to God.

Let me say we are agreed that the ordinary Instruments appointed by Christ to convey the Ministerial Authority to select Men, and to perpetuate it in the Church, are those superior Church Officers we call Bishops; Revelation looks this way, and that Ambiguity there is in the Style of Scriptures, in respect to the Name of Bishop, is clear'd up by the eldest Writers of the Church, and in particular by *Ignatius* an Apostolical Man.

Our present Difference is about the Uninterruption of the Episcopal Succession: The Truth of the Matter is, Episcopacy is the ordinary Method of conveying Ministerial Authority, and of perpetuating that Authority in the Church: But you think this Method of Conveyance is absolutely necessary to constitute a true Church, and to confer Authority on Men, to act ministerially in it: And to support this Opinion, you find it very proper to assert the Uninterruption of the Episcopal Succession: But I cannot think this Method of conveying Ministerial Authority absolutely necessary to constitute a true Church, and that for this Reason, because there appears to me, to have been a very critical Juncture of Time, when the Chain of the Episcopal Succession was broke, as I shall shew in the Sequel of this Letter, and when it became necessary

(e) Heb. 5. 1.

to have recourse to an extraordinary Method of calling Men into the Ministry.

Extraordinary Allowances have been always granted to extraordinary Cases; and so it hath been in all the Dispensations of God's Will to Men, wherein the Legislator hath prescribed positive Institutions for the Observance of Men: Thus Ceremonies and Sacrifices, external Regulations, and positive Institutions, which were of Divine Appointment under *Moses*, were regularly suspended whenever they happen'd to interfere in the Circumstances of Observance, with the eternal Laws of Morality, or to become impracticable by the intervening of Accidents and Necessities.

A very full Illustration of this, we have in the Case of (f) *Zippora's* circumcising her own Son. According to the Divine Institution of the Sacrament of Circumcision, This Work was to be done by the Master of the Family; but here being an extraordinary Case, *Moses* being disabled to do his Duty in this respect, by the Consternation he was under, upon the terrible Appearance of the Angel; God Almighty did accept of the charitable Work of *Zippora*, and stop the Prosecution that was out against *Moses* for his Neglect. Is it not plain in the Case before us, that the Obligations of the positive Laws of God are suspended by extraordinary Accidents, and that the Legislator doth accept of the charitable, tho' unauthorized Interpositions of Men in uncommon Cases?

The holy Prophets are clear in concluding that positive Institutions of Divine Appointment, which derive their Obligations from the arbitrary Imposition of the Legislator, are suspended whenever they interfere with the Moral Duties: And our

(f) *Exod.* 4. 25.

Lord handles this Case in his Gospel, and determines that these things we ought to do; namely, that we ought to observe the Moral Duties, which he calls the (g) *weightier Matters of the Law* in the first Place, but not so as to leave the other positive Precepts undone, when the Observance of them doth not trespass upon the superior Duties of eternal Morality; and when they happen to interfere, that then Mercy is to be before Sacrifice.

The Matter that now lies before me for Dispatch, is to shew you that there are insuperable Difficulties in making out the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession, as the Proof of this depends, as I have before observed, upon *Rome's* being a true Church *quoad esse*, after she was fallen into Heresy and Idolatry; This is the Rock upon which the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession is built, and if it can be substantially proved that *Rome* after her Fall into Heresy and Idolatry, was no true Church *quoad esse*, then it will follow by a clear Consequence, that all the Ordinations in her, after she ceased to be a true Church *quoad esse*, are meer Nullities; then the Episcopal Succession we derive from her Ordinations, will evidently appear to be broke.

Give me leave to observe, that our old Reformers at Home and Abroad were generally of this Opinion, that *Rome* after her Fall into Heresy and Idolatry, ceased to be a true Church *quoad esse*: and in this the Reformers agreed with the antient Church of the *Vaudois*, and with the *Bobemian Brethren* of the *Faborite* way: You know very well, for I am speaking to one who is not ignorant of these Matters, that it was a customary thing amongst the Reformers, to call the Bishop of *Rome* the Man of Sin, and the Apostate *Roman Church*, *Babylon*

(g) *Matth.* 23. 23.

the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and of the Abominations of the Earth.

This Opinion was embraced as good Protestant Divinity by the greatest Part of our establish'd Clergy, and universally by the whole Body of the Puritan Dissenters: Hence it was that when Bishop *Laud* in his Controversy with the Jesuit, had allow'd the Church of *Rome* to be a true Church *quoad esse*, that this Concession of his was very ill receiv'd, and clamor'd against as a New Doctrine; and his Enemies made great use of it to inflame the People against him, as a Favourer of *Rome*: The Truth of it is, *Rome* before this had not received such Complements from the Pens of the Reformed Way.

It is not my Business to defend our Reformers in those bitter Characters they bestow'd upon *Rome*: I know there have been formerly, and now are, great Names who think otherwise on this Affair. But we must say this for the Reformers, that there is a vast Similitude in the Fashion of the Doctrines of corrupt *Rome*, to what the Scripture speaks of the Man of Sin, and of *Babylon* the Great, and that our Reformers had Authority to take *Rome* up upon Suspicion, and that they did not wander in what they said, from the Character of good Divines and Textuaries. So much for the Opinion of the Reformers.

II. I am now to put you in mind, that it was the Opinion of the Primitive Church, that Heresy in Fundamentals did vacate the Clerical Mission, and reduce the Heretical Clergy into the Condition of Laymen. This Point is historically and fully settled in a Piece lately publish'd by the learned and judicious (b) Mr. *Bingham*, to which I refer you. What now will become of the Heretical Clergy of

(b) *Schol. Hist. of Bap. Vol. II.*

Rome? We cannot derive our Episcopal Succession from them; they had lost their own Authority by their Heresy, and consequently had no Right to convey any to those they ordained; what I beseech you will you now do with the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession? Where will you find it? *Rome*, according to the standing Doctrine of the Primitive Church, after her Fall into Heresy, had no Clergy, and was no Church.

It is the Opinion of *Rome* herself, that Heresy doth unchurch the Heretical Body of Christians: It is upon the Strength of this Doctrine that she is pleased to unchurch the Eastern Church; she calls the Mistake about the *Filioq*; which the *Greek* Church hath embraced, Heretical; and upon this as you well know, she hath declared her to be no Church. *Rome*, thou shalt be judg'd out of thy own Mouth, thy Heresy of Idolatry, thy Heresy of subordinate Mediators, thy Heresy of Image Worship, according to those Notions thou hast of Heresy, doth unchurch thee, and vacate the Orders of thy Clergy.

The uninterrupted Succession in the Ministry of the Church, being destroyed upon granting *Rome* to err in Fundamentals; some Protestant Writers amongst us, to guard the Succession against this dismal Shock, are pleased to allow *Rome* to be Orthodox in Fundamentals, and to err only *circa fundamentalia*: No less a Man than Archbishop *Land* goes away with this Complemental Distinction; but I think the Distinction hath little Weight in it, and that we have no Occasion to be so civil to *Rome* to serve our own Turn: Is not Idolatry, that which they give to their breathen God, a fundamental Error? (I mean their transitive Worship) Is not this a plain Contradiction to the Divine Command which forbids Images? Is not their Doctrine about subordinate Mediators a fundamental Error, quite contrary

contrary to the Oneness of the Mediatorial Headship of Christ? It is very strange that Protestant Writers should thus contradict plain Scriptures, only to serve the Hypothesis of an uninterrupted Succession.

III. What hath been hitherto offered, to prove the corrupt Church of *Rome* to be no true Church *quoad esse*, from the Authority of the Primitive Church, and from the Opinions of the Reformers, I shall endeavour to establish by the better Authority of (i) Scripture. It is a Principle universally received, that Publick and Authoritative Errors in Fundamentals do unchurch the erring Society of Christians: The Belief that Christ is the Head of his Church is a Fundamental of the Gospel; and an Error in the Belief of this Article, according to the general Opinion of Christians, as it is an Error in Fundamentals, doth unchurch the erring Society of Christians.

This Headship of Christ is mediatorial, bestowed upon him by God the Father, in Reward of his Sufferings for Men. Now those People who deny the Mediatorial Headship and Government of Christ, (who deny Christ to be the Head of his Church, which is a Mediatorial Headship, that will expire when the Occasions for his Mediation are ceased, in the Glorification of the Church, and in the entire Conquest of all its Enemies) err fundamentally, and unchurch themselves, because they want one of the integral Parts of a Church, a Belief in the Mediatorial Headship of Christ; the main Point implied in St. *Peter's* Confession, the very thing our Lord calls the Rock, upon which he would build his Church.

(i) *Matth.* 16. 16, 18. *Rom.* 14. 9. *Phil.* 2. 8, 9, 10.
Psalms 110. 1. *1 Cor.* 15. 24, 25.

What *Rome* doth in this Matter is plain in her Missals, upon the Festivals of her Saints: She is something nicer now in this Point than she was before the Reformation; but yet there is Error and Heresy enough in her Constitution to make her Churchship a Question, for her Mediators of Intercession are inconsistent with the Oneness of the Mediatorial Headship of Christ; a Heresy in Fundamentals, that doth unchurch according to her own Opinion of Heresy.

Once more, and I have done: In the Infancy of the Reformation, those who manag'd the Interests of *Rome*, pressed briskly upon the Reformers the Necessity of an uninterrupted Episcopal Succession; and in this they thought they might have some Advantage against us; and in the Beginning of *Queen Elizabeth* when the Reformation began to revive, the *Romanists* renew'd this Controversy, and endeavour'd to disgrace the Ordination of *Matthew Parker* with the Story of the *Naggs-Head* Ordination; but since this Matter hath been clear'd up by our *Mason*, and *Bramhall*, they have given us no more trouble upon this Head.

The old Reformers did not much concern themselves with the Succession; but what they mostly did was to prove *Rome* to be an Idolatrous and Heretical Church, and consequently the Necessity of leaving her Communion.

Rome was very uneasy under the Impression of this Charge, and pleaded that these Words of Christ, (k) *I will be with you always, unto the end of the World*, did imply that Christ would have a perpetual visible Church upon Earth, and that the Church of *Rome* must be the true visible Church of Christ, there being no other visible Church in the

(k) *Matth.* 28. 20.

World at the Reformation: It must be owned that Christ will have a true visible Church in the Earth to the End of the World, and that the Scripture used in this Controversy can mean nothing less.

But we are not, I humbly conceive, under any Necessity to allow *Rome* to be a true Church *quoad esse*, in that we can find a Church without the Pale of the Western Patriarchate, professing the Essentials of Christianity, and worshipping God without Idolatry.

I will not dispute the Interest of the *Greek Church* with *Rome*; tho' by the by, the *Filioq*; is no Matter of Faith, and she hath been learnedly defended in this Point against the Charge of *Rome* by our *Stillingfleet*: I will not put them off with this indefinite Answer, when they ask us where our Church was before *Luther*, that it was where the Church of *Israel* was, under the grand Apostacy that happened in her in the Reign of *Ahab*; that our Church, and the true Church of Christ, was amongst those Seven Thousand Knees who had not bowed to *Baal*.

This Answer is good; for altho' it is true, that Christ will have a visible Society of Worshippers to the End of the World, yet it doth not hence follow that this visible true Church of Christ will be magnificent and glorious; the Scriptures only speak of a true Church; and a Church in Persecution, a Church in Dens and Caves of the Earth, a Church of true Believers in Mountains and Valleys, adequately answers the Scripture Account of it.

The learned Doctor *Allix* in his *Historical Remarks* upon the Condition of the Church of Christ in the *Italick Diocese*, hath furnish'd us with a direct Answer to this Quere, Where was your Church before *Luther*? This learned Man hath proved the Church in the *Italick Diocese* did not fall in with the Idolatry and Corruption of *Rome* before the
Eleventh -

Eleventh Century, and that she preserved till then, Christianity enough to denominate and constitute her a true Church of Believers; and that the Church of the *Vaudois* separated themselves from the Church establish'd in the *Italick* Diocese in this Century, upon the Score of the Corruptions that were come into her, and preserved in her a true Succession of Apostolical Doctrines and Government. So when *Rome* asks us Where our Church was before *Luther*? We can say and prove that it was in the *Italick* Diocese, and in the Church of the *Vaudois*. A brave Generation of Christians, who were persecuted, afflicted, and tormented, for the sake of a good Conscience, and for the Testimony of the Truth as it is in *Jesus*, by the Power of Idolatrous *Rome*.

I presume enough hath been offer'd to shew you that uninterrupted Succession is a Matter difficult to be proved, and that my Lord of *Bangor* was not out in calling it a Nicety, altho' you swell in this Point, and dictate to your Superiors.

Give me leave to observe that our Christianity and Churchship doth not depend upon this Nicety of the uninterrupted Episcopal Succession: Extraordinary Cases allow of extraordinary Methods; the positive Institutions of God are to give way to greater Duties, as hath been proved. The Truth of the Matter is, it is our Duty and Interest, where the Episcopal Succession can be found, to come intirely into it.

But when this possibly cannot be found, or when the Episcopal CHURCH upon an Establishment will not come into a Reformation of Errors, nor ordain Men into the Ministry of the Church, without subscribing to Errors of a damnable Malignity; or when the CHURCH establish'd falls into Idolatry, and unchurches herself, and ceases to have a Right to confer Orders:

May not those good Christians, to whom God hath made known the Danger of living in the Communion of an Idolatrous Church; who believe that the Idolatrous Church is no true Church *quoad esse*, and that her Right to ordain Men into the Ministry is vacated by her Heresies: May not these good Christians chuse amongst themselves godly and able Men, Men of good Report among the Brethren, to serve in holy Things? May they not supply the Necessities of the Church by an extraordinary way?

I do not see how we can secure the Protestant Churches Abroad, or our own Mission into the Ministry at Home, without some very favourable Construction of the uninterrupted Succession: the Church of Rome from whose Hands we derive the Succession you talk so much about, being no true Church *quoad esse*, being unchurched by Idolatry and Heresy.

Sir, It is your Promise you have given us to clear up the Matter of the uninterrupted Succession, that encourages me to trouble you with my Thoughts upon this delicate Subject: I am sensible of my unfitness to make a Figure in Controversy, I write not for Triumph and Glory, but to gain further Satisfaction in a Point, you seem by your confident talking upon it, to have much studied; and I do assure you when you have cleared up this Matter, I will readily acknowledge the Service you have done me.

But in the mean time, I shall conclude my Complements in the fine Words of our Chillingworth: (a) *Since God hath authorized no Man to force all Men to a Unity of Opinions, I think it best to content ourselves with, and perswade others to a Unity of Character and mutual Toleration.*

Your most obedient Servant,

Anthony Holbrook.

(a) Cap. 2. p. 64. Fol.

